

**What is Raja Yoga?** What is the 8-limbed path of Raja Yoga? Here is a simple, logical explanation I have just written. I did include references on Samyama.

Yoga is a natural way of life. Raja means Royal. So, Raja Yoga = Royal Natural Way of Life.

**8 Limbs from Patanjali's Yoga Sutras.** Throughout all of the 8 limbs, and throughout all of the way of natural living, Love is the thread that informs, guides, and enlightens. Nurture love. Radiate Love. Accept Love.

**First Limb.** Yamas. Restraints.

There are five stages in the first limb, in order of achievement.

Ahimsa. Non-violence. No violence to yourself, other people, animals, all creatures, all of the Earth, and the Universe. Honor everyone and what they have, and what they have the potential to develop. These are all precious gifts to everyone, and they must be honored.

Satya. Truth. Tell the truth to yourself, to everyone, and live the truth in every thought, word, and action. Honor everyone and what they have, and what they have the potential to develop. These are all precious gifts to everyone, and they must be honored.

Asteya. Non-stealing. Do not steal from yourself, or from anyone, any animal, all creatures, all of the Earth, and the Universe. Honor everyone and what they have, and what they have the potential to develop. These are all precious gifts to everyone, and they must be honored.

Brahmacharya. Non-lusting. Do not be consumed by lust. Honor everyone and what they have, and what they have the potential to develop. These are all precious gifts to everyone, and they must be honored.

Aparigraha. Non-attachment. Do not be consumed by attachments to yourself, any person, animal, creature, all of the Earth, and the Universe, including any task, art, or action. Be fully immersed at the time of each action, and then let it go. One must live in the present, not be consumed by reliving and analysis of the past. By living in the present, the way can be known. Even the word known is in the past by definition.

**Second Limb.** Niyamas. Observances.

There are five stages in the second limb, in order of achievement.

Saucha. Cleanliness. This means to put your house in order, no clutter, and no poisons, toxins. The house means your mind, your body, and your living environment. Being pure in your heart, mind, and in your living habits will purify you and prepare you for the next stage. This means what you think, what you eat, and how you are living. All of the previous stages and limbs are always concurrent, and equally essential. Drop any of them, and you will fall from the path.

Santosha. Contentment. Now that you have purified your heart, mind, and body, you are content, and you are ready for the next stage of purification and enlightenment. Life is challenging and always moving. Just when we think we are at rest, we may receive a shock or challenge.

Tapasya. Duty. Literally means 'Produced by Heat'. Purity forged by fire in the crucible of life. Listen within and without for guidance. The Guide is always present, inseparable from yourself. Always do your duty without delay. This means discipline and paying attention to every thought, word, and action.

Svadhya. Self-Study.

Ishvara Pranidhana. Devotion to the Supreme. All One.

**Third Limb.** Asana. Seat. This means to be comfortably seated in your body, mind, heart, spirit, all One.

**Fourth Limb.** Pranayama. Breath of life. Natural observance of the breath.

**Fifth Limb.** Pratyahara. Withdrawal of attachment to senses. Awareness of within and without.

Preparation for Samyama (garland, holding together, binding), **the next three limbs, Dharana, Dhyana, Samadhi.**

Here is a useful passage from the Wikipedia page on Samyama. "Samyama is defined in the [Yoga Sutras](#) of [Patanjali](#) verses 3.1 through 3.6:

देशबन्धश्चित्तस्य धारणा ॥ १ ॥

deśabandhaścittasya dhāraṇā .. 1..

Fixing the consciousness on one point or region is concentration (dhāraṇā).

तत्र प्रत्ययैकतानता ध्यानम् ॥ २ ॥

tatra pratyayaikatānatā dhyānam .. 2..

A steady, continuous flow of attention directed towards the same point or region is meditation (dhyāna).

तद् एवार्थमात्रनिर्भासं स्वरूपशून्यम् इव समाधिः ॥ ३ ॥

tad evārthamātranirbhāsaṃ svarūpaśūnyam iva samādhiḥ .. 3..

When the object of meditation engulfs the meditator, appearing as the subject, self-awareness is lost. This is samādhi.

त्रयम् एकत्र संयमः ॥ ४ ॥

trayam ekatra saṃyamaḥ .. 4..

These three together [dhāraṇā, dhyāna and samādhi] constitute integration or saṃyama.

तज्जयात् प्रज्ञालोकः ॥ ५ ॥

tajjayāt prajñālokaḥ .. 5..”

From mastery of saṃyama comes the light of awareness and insight.

तस्य भूमिषु विनियोगः ॥ ६ ॥

tasya bhūmiṣu viniyogaḥ .. 6..

Saṃyama may be applied in various spheres to derive its usefulness.

Healing Light Kata ~ LIGHT FORM Healing Light Yoga and Massage <https://healinglight.info> steve.davis@healinglight.info  
503-724-2755 Steve J Davis, RYT, LMT, BCTMB. YA #29243, OBMT #13099, NCTMB #512195-6, NPI#1124359088

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